



CDSS

CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 19, 2007

CONTACT: Shirley Washington

Michael Weston

(916) 657-2268

GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER PROCLAIMS APRIL 2007 CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Hundreds Gather for "Kids' Day at the Capitol" Celebration

SACRAMENTO – Reaffirming his commitment to protecting the health and safety of California's children, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger proclaimed April 2007 as Child Abuse Prevention Month. To commemorate this annual celebration, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), in partnership with Prevent Child Abuse California, was joined today by hundreds of children, caregivers and organizations from across the State at "Kids' Day at the Capitol" event, which is held to educate the community about child abuse, prevention and intervention strategies and highlight available resources designed to protect children and promote healthy families.

"California's future teachers, business owners and government leaders are all children who are currently learning and growing in our communities. It is our responsibility as caring citizens to ensure that their childhood consists of a nurturing environment where violence is never tolerated," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "To make certain that our State's next generation consists of well-adjusted, contributing members to society, we must take the necessary steps to prevent child abuse. This month, I applaud the strides we are making as a State to reduce the risk of child abuse and the continuing work we will accomplish – one child and one family at a time."

With nearly 500,000 reports of child abuse and neglect occurring each year, California spends more than a billion dollars on services to assist children who are abused or at risk of abuse. Taxpayer costs do not stop when a child turns 18 years of age, but continues through adulthood for those individuals who are faced with severe consequences of poor health, lack of education, drug addiction, criminal activity and welfare dependency resulting from abuse. Strengthening community involvement and public awareness reduce the negative affects often caused by years of child abuse and neglect.

"Far too many children suffer from preventable abuse and neglect," said Cliff Allenby, Interim Director of CDSS. "Today's celebration underscores the Governor's priority of ensuring child safety while elevating community awareness of our responsibility to protect California's children and help them lead healthy, nurturing lives in a safe home environment."

-more-

Scott Juceam was the featured speaker at the event. As the founder of the Hannah Rose Foundation, he spoke passionately of the need to educate the community about the fatal consequences of Shaken Baby Syndrome. Scott is the father of Hannah Rose Juceam, a 15-month-old girl who died from Shaken Baby Syndrome allegedly at the hands of her care provider nearly a year ago. He encouraged the community, especially parents, to be observant of a child's behavior and emphatically stressed to persons caring for children "Don't shake your baby."

"By educating all Californians about the array of resources available in their community, we are not only helping to prevent abuse before it occurs, but also building a solid foundation for generations to come," said Juceam.

The event also recognized the collaborative efforts of community advocates, legislators, social workers, parents, clinicians and partnership groups that work on behalf of abused and neglected children.

"Kids Day is about the future - children's futures, parents' futures and community futures," said Sheila Anderson, president of Prevent Child Abuse California. "We are shining a light on abuse and prevention efforts and encouraging everyone to recognize the important role they play in strengthening community resources and enhancing awareness."

Adrienne Bankert of KCRA-TV 3 in Sacramento served as the emcee of the daylong event that included participation by legislators and other community advocates. Children of all ages enjoyed fun-filled, interactive activities and viewed displays of the winning entries and honorable mentions from the "Heroes for Kids" art contest. Three contest finalists from Los Angeles, Lakeport and Jackson were awarded \$100 gift certificates.

"Kids Day at the Capitol" is one of many events being held nationwide in April to commemorate Child Abuse Prevention Month. Through the support of government, community organizations, child abuse prevention councils and advocates, child abuse prevention awareness helps to educate adults about their responsibilities in caring for children. For more information about child abuse prevention, log on to http://www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/ChildAbuse_188.htm.

#